

affected by this, as well as issues in countries that are currently experiencing an outbreak.

Integration from the Federal, State and local levels is going to be critical. The global health threat is important. It should not, indeed, it cannot be ignored. But preparing for the threat within our own country is certainly critical.

The virus, H5N1, could appear in the bird population as early as this fall in the Western Hemisphere; and even if it does appear in birds it doesn't mean that a pandemic has started. But because of the natural flyways that exist, that is a possibility that we need to be, we, in Congress, need to be prepared for how we educate our constituents and how we help our State and local officials adjust to that.

Preparedness is going to be the greatest single tool at our disposal to mitigate what might otherwise be a disaster of worldwide proportions.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important issue. I thank you for the time and letting me come to the House and talk about this tonight. I know I have covered a lot of these issues relatively quickly. I know a lot of the maps are somewhat involved, and they have gone by quickly. They are available on my Web site at burgess.house.gov.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a concurrent resolution of the House of the following title:

H. Con. Res. 367. Concurrent resolution honoring and praising the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution on the 100th anniversary of being granted its Congressional Charter.

OUR IRAQ POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This evening I come to the floor to continue the discussion that this Congress has had with respect to our policies as it relates to Iraq.

I was fortunate this past weekend to attend yet another ceremony, in this case, with the 1048th Tankers Division from the State of Connecticut who was being deployed to Iraq.

We in this country continue to owe a great debt of gratitude to the men and women who wear the uniform and who have served this country so valiantly and with such courage. But we also owe a deep debt of gratitude to their families in what has become gut-wrenching ceremonies as you watch young children and mothers and grandparents say goodbye to their loved ones who are going over to Iraq, including a mother who has three sons that are now over there, and another mother who saw her

son off and her husband had just left the week before.

So it is very disconcerting when you find that the only people that we have asked to make a sacrifice in the war on terror have become the men and women who serve in the front lines and their families who are left behind.

Our hearts go out to all of them. And what they deserve, more than anything else, is a Nation that will level with them, that will provide them with a plan, that will tell these troops, especially in the case of the National Guard and the reservists who have been deployed, redeployed, deployed again, their stays more so than at any other point in the history of this country, and they do so with a salute and they follow orders. How grateful a Nation we should be.

And yet here at home we hear, just in the previous hour, discussions that center on a tax cut and how important a tax cut is. I have never met anyone that didn't favor tax cuts. But it is disconcerting when you look out at these families and you see that this Congress focuses on tax cuts for the Nation's wealthiest 1 percent, making sure that we ladle on more tax cuts to those already impoverished oil companies who are experiencing unprecedented profits.

Yet I look out into that audience in Connecticut, in the State armory and see these families, many who will struggle during this time, many whose gas prices will rise during the time of this 18-month deployment.

So you say to yourself, well, where is the plan? What is the exit strategy? What do we owe these individuals? Do we not at least owe them the truth?

So there was a debate enjoined on this floor 2 weeks ago, a nonbinding resolution, in essence, a conversation, a conversation where 99 percent of the people on the other side of the aisle said, stay the course, while the Nation and while this side of the aisle clamors for a new direction for America.

When I looked out into the eyes of the audience of those families and I saw their concern and need, they want a new direction for the country, especially as it relates to Iraq.

Isn't it amazing that they can get a plan from the Iraqi government, that they can get several plans from Democrats, whether it be JACK MURTHA's bold plan that, well, seemingly the Iraqi government agrees with, or whether it be CARL LEVIN's plan, well, that seemingly now General Casey agrees with?

So we find the Pentagon and the Iraqi government, JACK MURTHA, CARL LEVIN, and several other Democrats offering thoughtful plans, and the Republicans saying stay the course and a President still unable to level with the American people and unwilling still to meet with parents who have lost their kids, who line the highway on the way to Crawford, Texas, or wait patiently outside The White House for an audience.

It amazes me that, while the Iraqis can say that they have a position and they know that they have to take on

responsibility, that we will somehow let the Iraqis determine the faith of our brave men and women, so much so that there has even been talk of amnesty, amnesty for those who have killed, maimed or kidnapped American soldiers or citizens. There can be no amnesty for that. There is no honor in the great sacrifice that our men and women have provided. No matter what the Iraqi government might say, we, as the United States Congress, have an obligation to our men and women and the citizens that are in Iraq working on behalf of this country to make sure that that cannot stand.

And what do we get from our erstwhile colleagues on the other side of the aisle and why was this debate conducted in the manner that it was?

Well, let me tell you why. Because Karl Rove hatched a plan in New Hampshire. You see, he went there and laid out this strategy; and the strategy was a very simple one. It is one that they used before. They just dusted off the playbook and said, you know, it works when we attack Democrats. We attack them for their patriotism.

It worked successfully against Max Cleland. We were able to take that man, who gave three of his limbs for this country, to make him appear to be unpatriotic and go after him personally.

It worked against JOHN KERRY. We were able to swift boat him during the Presidential campaign, to tarnish his service and the medals he earned.

And it is working against JACK MURTHA, they think. So that we can turn around and tarnish him as well.

And Karl Rove launches his strategy, and then JOHN BOEHNER rolls out the talking points for the caucus, and then the debate is neatly sandwiched in between the time allotted, with no Democratic alternative being allotted, and the White House picnic, just in time for the President to take a surprise trip to Iraq for a photo-op and to return home.

The Nation deserves better than that. If the Iraqi security advisors can provide us with a plan, why can't Donald Rumsfeld provide us with a plan?

No wonder, in the Washington Post today and the New York Times over the weekend, people are wild over the fact that, if all that debate and discussion was truly about a course for this Nation, how is it that General Casey's plan sounds identical to CARL LEVIN's plan? And how is it that the Iraqis can acknowledge what Mr. MURTHA acknowledged last November?

On this side of the aisle, we have come to know what it is all about. It is about the continued hypocrisy as it relates to leveling with the American people and, more importantly, leveling with our troops, with the National Guard and reservists and their families and the kind of sacrifice that we have asked them to do, and we have prevailed upon them, and they have done

with honor. And yet we can't level with them?

We find ourselves right now with the congressional Republicans that have no plan for Iraq, a flawed plan for going in, a failed plan to win, and no plan to get out. Stay the course is the slogan. And that is all it is, a slogan, not a solution. It is a prescription for an endless occupation of Iraq.

The Democrats are united on the need for a new direction in Iraq. 2006 must be a year of significant transition. Iraqis must take control of their security and begin a responsible redeployment of U.S. troops.

There has been no person who has addressed that issue more eloquently on this floor and back home in her native California in the city of the Angels than the gentlewoman from California, who has led a task force here in this Congress that focuses on a meaningful plan for an exit strategy from Iraq.

At this time, I would like to yield to the distinguished lady from California, MAXINE WATERS.

Ms. WATERS. I thank the gentleman, Mr. JOHN LARSON, for yielding me time and for organizing this special order.

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It is so important that we continue daily to help the American people understand exactly what is going on in this Congress. Time out for tricks. Time out for maneuvering. Time out for all of that. And I am so pleased that JOHN LARSON organized this Special Order tonight so that we can clarify what is going on here in America.

I rise as the Chair of the Out of Iraq Caucus. The caucus has 72 members, who for more than a year have been fighting to conclude the war in Iraq and reunite our troops with their families.

Over the weekend the New York Times reported that General Casey met with President Bush to discuss redeploying U.S. troops from Iraq. According to the New York Times, the number of U.S. troops in Iraq will decline by two brigades by not replacing two brigades that are currently scheduled to leave Iraq this year. Further reductions in U.S. personnel will occur next year. The number of brigades in Iraq is expected to drop from 14 to about five by the end of 2007. The Casey plan also provides for a brigade to be kept on alert in Kuwait "in case American commanders need to augment their forces to deal with a crisis. Another brigade will be kept on a lesser state of alert elsewhere but still prepared to deploy quickly." According to the Times, carrying out the terms of this plan depends on developments on the ground in Iraq.

Now, why don't we just tell it like it is? This is basically the Murtha plan. This plan is so similar to a plan that the Out of Iraq Caucus has been pushing since late last year, the Murtha plan, H.J. Res. 73.

Under Congressman MURTHA's plan, no additional U.S. troops will be sent

to Iraq and the U.S. troops now deployed in Iraq will be redeployed out of Iraq at a point determined by U.S. generals in Iraq, which is very similar to the plan outlined by General Casey. The Murtha resolution also calls for a contingent of marines to remain in the Middle East to respond to threats that threaten to destabilize our allies in the region or the national security of the United States, again mirroring the Casey plan.

Finally, the resolution calls for the United States to pursue security and stability in Iraq through diplomacy. Again, the Times reports that the General Casey plan is to engage the Iraqi Government to develop a plan to turn security over to the Iraqis.

With nearly identical parameters, it appears that the administration proposes to carry out a plan that has already been introduced, debated, pushed by Mr. MURTHA himself and by the Out of Iraq Caucus and many members of this Democratic caucus. It is confusing to understand why then there was such outrage from the Republicans during the debate of H. Res. 861 two weeks ago during which members of the Out of Iraq Caucus called for all Members of Congress to support the Murtha plan. The only conclusion is that the Republicans are again playing politics with the safety of our Nation.

Instead of holding a free and open debate on Iraq, they crafted a resolution, H. Res. 861, to intentionally mislead the American people and seize an opportunity to attack Democrats who want accountability for those who led the march to war in Iraq. Democrats are also demanding that the President provide a clear plan that will allow for the redeployment of U.S. troops and permit them to return home to their loved ones.

The Out of Iraq Caucus can support the proposed Casey plan. It is our plan. It is the Murtha plan. It is the plan that we have been pushing all along. Their plan we do not disagree with. We just wanted them to have some leadership. They had made so many mistakes, so many mishaps, as Condoleezza Rice called it, that we kept urging them to come up with a plan. We are glad they have adopted the Murtha plan.

According to news reports, the implementation of this plan will begin just prior to the November elections. The next step will be completed as the 2008 Presidential elections are heating up, providing the President an opportunity to claim progress despite more than 3 years of mismanagement and incompetence.

Mr. Speaker, this war was mismanaged by this administration. The men and women in uniform have paid for that mismanagement, more than 2,500 with their own lives. It is long past time to bring our troops home, and I will not rest until our service men and women are able to return home to their loved ones.

Be clear. We are glad that Mr. Casey and the President have come up with

what we have been advocating. We are glad that they have seen the light of day. We are pleased that they understand that the American people want real leadership and they want an end to this war, they want the troops home. So while we know that it may be calculated in a political way to time with the November elections and all that, we still support it. I do, and the Out of Iraq Caucus will certainly embrace it because, again, it is our plan.

When Mr. MURTHA talked about over the horizon, that is exactly what he was talking about, the same thing the Casey plan has come up with: keep some soldiers in the region just in case they are needed in a crisis.

So thank you, Mr. Casey and Mr. President, for finally embracing the Democrat plan by Mr. MURTHA that calls for redeployment. It has been misinterpreted, misidentified. Even the press got it wrong, and they tried to say that the Murtha plan was demanding that our troops get out immediately. It has never been that.

Now I want to see how the press will interpret the Casey plan, if the press will understand and report that it is the Murtha plan.

I will say it over and over again. I am pleased and proud that the President and Mr. Casey at least have come to the point, for whatever reasons, whatever their motivations are, to embrace something that will work, the Murtha plan.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentlewoman; and I just want to buttress her point here. In The Washington Post, first, CARL LEVIN, our distinguished Senator and brother of SANDER LEVIN here in the House, one of the sponsors of the resolution, said that "probably the worst kept secret in town is that this administration intends to pull out troops before the midterm elections in November. It shouldn't be a political decision, but it's going to be with this administration. It is as clear as the nose on my face," he said, "that it is all about November and this election." And as the gentlewoman pointed out, it shouldn't be.

JACK MURTHA has said over and over again only the Iraqis can solve the problems in Iraq. They are fighting with each other, and our troops are caught in between.

And no one less than Iraq's National Security Advisor said, "Iraq has to go out of the shadow of the United States and the coalition, take responsibility for its own decisions, learn from its mistakes, and find Iraqi solutions to Iraqi problems." Repeating again exactly what Mr. MURTHA has been advocating.

I want to now also turn to the gentleman from Washington State (Mr. INSLEE), who has been part of the Iraq Watch and from the very outset of this war has come to this floor almost on a regular basis to talk about the concerns that so many Americans in this

country care deeply about, most notably the men and women who serve this country.

I yield to Mr. INSLEE.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate Mr. LARSON's leadership on this.

I wanted to talk about three hard realities in Iraq. It is very easy, tempting when we are in the middle of a struggle, as our Armed Forces are, to forget harsh realities and to become emboldened by the rhetoric that is associated with war. But I think it is very important for us, when our sons and daughters and husbands and wives are there, to just take a very cold, harsh, realistic look at what is really going on in Iraq. This is not a moment for rose-colored glasses. It is a moment for reality. And I want to talk about the three realities in Iraq today, because basically the debate over Iraq is really twofold.

One side says that we should just keep doing what we are doing. We will just trust the President to make the decisions as he has made them in Iraq. We won't question them. We won't ask to accelerate them. We won't question the strategy. Congress will just sit back and let George Bush decide what to do in Iraq.

Others of us take a different approach that says the status quo is inadequate, that we cannot expect to keep doing the same thing in Iraq and expect a different result. So we believe we need some changes in Iraq. And I want to talk about some three realities about why we need a change, why the status quo is unacceptable, unacceptable in Iraq.

Number one, the security situation. The reality in Iraq is that the current strategy proposed by the Bush administration is resulting in things not only not staying the same but getting worse. If you take a look at the Brookings Institution, you can go online and take a look at the Brookings Institution's Web site. Anybody can Google that to find Brookings. You will find the statistics that I want to talk about tonight.

Fatalities in Iraq of Armed Forces are not only going down; they are going up. Compared to May 2003 and May 2005, we are now experiencing greater loss of our sons and daughters in Iraq than we were 2 years ago, 3 years ago. Those are going up, regrettably. The Bush plan is not working when it comes to protecting our men and women in uniform.

When you looked at the wounded in the Brookings Institution report, regrettably, they are not going down; they are going up, compared to 2½ years ago. When you look at Iraqi fatalities compared to the same time in February, March, May 2005, they are going up. When you look at the number of car bombs in May 2004, to May 2006, they are going up. When you look at Iraqi civilians killed, in fact, the number of Iraqi civilians killed compared to the same period about 3 years ago, they are three times higher per month.

And I think we rightfully care about Iraqi civilian fatalities from a sense of humanity and from a sense of the American spirit.

When you look at the number of multiple fatality bombings, they are up by a factor of 50 times higher than they were 3 years ago, a 50 times increase in multiple fatality bombings that the Iraqis are experiencing. When you look at crime-related deaths, they are up 50 times what they were over 2 years ago. When you look at the number of daily attacks, they are up compared to May 2004. When you look at weekly attacks on our service personnel, 2 years ago they went from 185 to 620 now. Up substantially, unfortunately.

So the security situation under the George Bush plan for security in Iraq, all of the indicators are going in the wrong direction. The status quo is not adequate. We cannot just trust the President with making decisions in Iraq.

So I want to turn now to sort of the life-style, if you call it that, in economic conditions in Iraq. We were told, when we were briefed on this war by Paul Wolfowitz and others of the President's men and women, that oil would be quickly restored in Iraq and that, indeed, the Iraqis would pay for this war by themselves. In fact, the production of oil today has still not reached prewar levels under that tyrannical, abysmal dictator Saddam Hussein. We still have not achieved oil and gas production records on one of the largest pools of oil on Earth; they are still at 2.18 million barrels compared to 2.5 in the prewar level. We still are not back up to those levels. And we are paying hundreds of billions of dollars today for Iraq.

In electricity we, at best, are back to prewar levels after 3 years and untold tens of millions of dollars squandered, American taxpayer dollars. And, in fact, in Baghdad today I read they are having a heat wave in Baghdad and they still only have 3 to 4 hours a day of electricity. You can imagine, after 3 years of sitting under a foreign army's occupation, with 3 hours of electricity for your air conditioner. I read these Iraqis said that, We basically sit and look at each other. I read this comment by a middle-class Iraqi who said, We are going crazy doing that. And I can understand that.

The economic condition is not making substantial improvement in Iraq under the harsh realities.

So now we turn to the political situation and ask ourselves if the George Bush plan is adequate on Iraq. And, yes, we have had elections and we were all thrilled by elections. All of us would like to see a democratic Iraq. But there is a very harsh reality that we think demands a change of plans in Iraq.

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That is, until the Shia community and the Sunni community and the Kurd community can strike the hard

bargains it takes to make a democracy in Iraq, and particularly over access to the oil resource, which they still have not done after 3 years. It doesn't matter what an outside force will do. The current plan is not a plan for success.

Frankly, our continued presence in Iraq is now acting as a security blanket to allow the politicians in Iraq to refuse to move forward with hard compromises about oil revenues, which is dooming our military to be there for decades. That is why we need to send a message to the Iraqi politicians that we are not going to be there for decades and they must make the compromises necessary about oil revenues, because they are shortly going to have responsibility for their own country.

I am not the only one to think that. There are some people with some skin in this fight besides Americans, and that is the Iraqis. We went there to help the Iraqis. It was based on false information and deceit, but, nonetheless, Americans had I think the right intentions. So I think it pays some heed to see what the Iraqis think about this.

What the Iraqis think about this, when a poll was done January 31, 2006, by the World Public Opinion Poll, and that is not a group that has any particular dog in this fight, they went out and asked the Iraqi people, do you approve the government endorsing a timeline for U.S. withdrawal?

These are the people whose lives are most dependent on obtaining a secure, safe Iraq. They are not sitting thousands of miles away like we are, like the President is. They are sitting in these rooms with no electricity and 120 degrees temperature and bombs going off next door where they can't send their kids out to play. They may be considered perhaps the experts on this issue. What do the Iraqis say about that issue?

What they say is 87 percent of Iraqis would approve of the government endorsing a timeline for U.S. redeployment. That is something we ought to think about. I think there is a reason for that. I think there is a reason that 87 percent of the Iraqis who are living in such squalor and danger today believe that it makes sense for us to tell Iraqis that the time is shortly coming where the country will be theirs. I think the reason is they recognize that their politicians aren't going to get around to disposing of really coming up with an agreement on oil reserves until they know that the day is coming that the United States security blanket will be removed. The Iraqis have figured this out. We should figure it out.

So we are here today saying it is not enough just to trust President Bush with decisions in Iraq. Security is not getting better, the economy is not getting better, the political situation still really has not come to terms with the necessary compromise, and it is time for us to send a message to the Iraqi government that they need to get serious about resolving issues and redeploying our troops.

This is a strategy for success. The Bush plan is a strategy for long-term failure. It is time that we come to terms, take off the rose-colored glasses and make hard decisions.

I want to thank Mr. LARSON for allowing me to participate.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Washington State again for his insightful comments and pointing out the new direction that this country needs to forge and that certainly that the people of this country desire and, as you so eloquently pointed out, as importantly, the people of Iraq.

But I would also add that this is something that the generals of this country who have come forward and spoken out with great clarity also feel strongly about.

Lieutenant General Greg Newbold: "What we are living with now is the consequences of successive policy failures."

Major General Paul Eaton: "Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld is not competent to lead our Armed Forces. His failure to build coalitions with our allies has imposed far greater demands and risks on our soldiers in Iraq than necessary. He has shown himself to be incompetent strategically, operationally and tactically."

Lieutenant General John Riggs: "They only need the military advice when it satisfies their agenda," speaking on National Public Radio about the Bush administration. "They only need the military advice when it satisfies their own agenda."

General Wesley Clark: "They pressed for open warfare before diplomacy was finished. It was a tragic mistake. It's a strategic blunder."

General Anthony Zinni: "We are paying the price for the lack of credible planning, or the lack of a plan. Ten years worth of planning were thrown away, troop levels dismissed out of hand. These were strategic mistakes, mistakes of policy made back here by this administration."

Mr. INSLEE. Will the gentleman yield for a moment? I want to add an additional mistake, if I can briefly, that I think is very important for us to talk about, and that is the mistake to not send the message that the Iraqis are going to have a country that is free at some point of United States forces.

This poll that I talked about, when they asked Iraqis, do you think the U.S. Government plans to have permanent military bases in Iraq, 80 percent of the people answered that they thought we were going to do that.

When asked, do you believe that we will at some point remove our military once Iraq is stabilized, 80 percent of Iraqis believe we will not remove our forces even after Iraq is stabilized.

There is a reason for them to believe that. Because on this floor, when we tried to put a provision in a defense bill that says we won't have any Iraq permanent bases in Iraq, which we actu-

ally succeeded in doing on the floor, the first thing that happened, in the dead of night in one of these conference committees, the Republican Party stripped it out.

The message we are sending to Iraq is we are going to stay there as long as we want and perhaps permanently. That is the wrong message. We need to send a different message. That is why we are here tonight.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Someone who has sent that message consistently also hails from Washington State, the senior member of the delegation, JIM McDERMOTT, a distinguished member of the Ways and Means Committee.

(Mr. McDERMOTT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. LARSON for yielding. I want to thank him for organizing this event this evening to give us a chance to spend a little extra time talking about what is going on.

I think the American people, as they look at this situation, have every reason to be very confused about what is going on in Iraq; and I want to try to help them understand it.

The first thing you have to understand is that everything that is happening on this floor and in the other body has to do with the 7th of November, the election. Don't ever lose sight that what is being done here is to influence the American people to keep the Republicans in power in the next election.

Now, the confusion you feel is being created by the very people who want to retain power. If you ask yourself where are we today, well, on Saturday in the morning they announced in the London Times that Prime Minister Maliki wanted reconciliation. He wanted to have a reconciliation plan coming out, and he wanted to meet with the Sunnis and try to defuse the situation.

You would think that would be in everybody's interest. Did you hear one word from the White House about the Iraqis standing up and trying to defuse the situation? Did you hear any support? None. Because the basic underlying fact that my colleague from Washington has pointed out is we have no intention of leaving Iraq. We intend to be there with 50,000 troops and permanent bases for an extended period of time. But we won't say that. We say exactly the opposite.

What we are saying to the Iraqis is, now, look, this is what we mean. We mean we are not going to stay here. But the Iraqis open their eyes and they see this permanent stuff, and they say to themselves, it doesn't make any sense. They are not here on a temporary basis.

An Arab friend of mine in Jordan told me that one of the things that Americans do not understand is what it means to an Arab when you occupy his land, and as long as we occupy their land, they will fight. He said, you can

do all the talk you want, but until the United States indicates clearly that they are pulling their troops out, you will never get any peace in the area.

That was on Saturday morning. Then we come to the New York Times the next day, Sunday, quoting General Casey. Now this is the President that says, stay the course, stay the course; and the New York Times leaks a story saying that they have drafted a plan for withdrawing troops by September.

This is a leak. Did the President jump up and down and say, send out the FBI to find out who leaked that plan? No. Because they want to send that out to one part of the population. They want part of the United States to think we are actually going to pull the troops out, when in fact there is no real evidence that they are going to take them out.

The American people have got to stay awake. Ronald Reagan said you should trust, but verify. The President says stuff, but when you try to verify it, you can't find it. He is against leaks, as long as it is an official leak of something he wants to get out there. Karl Rove really wants to get it out there.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Reclaiming my time, in my opening remarks, this is confusing to American citizens, because Karl Rove, the Sunday prior to the debate that started here in this House, was in New Hampshire; and he laid out the strategic vision for the Republican Party. It was a political gathering, but he laid out that strategic vision. I can understand why the public gets confused, because he said very publicly that what we have to do is "stay the course," and then it was the Democrats who wanted, to use one of their slogans, "cut and run." But they were going to stay the course.

Then that was followed by the majority leader's talking points that were disseminated on the floor here which, of course, was again discrediting Democrats, and most notably Mr. MURTHA, about cutting and running.

Then it becomes even more confounding, because the debate that ensued was, as you point out, I think uplifting in some circumstances, because it was trying to define where people stand. Ninety-nine percent of them felt very strongly that we ought to stay the course, while 78 percent on this side felt there ought to be a new direction. So people became somewhat confused. And that was all sandwiched in between the President's flight and photo-op to Iraq and the White House picnic.

Then, lo and behold, last week, the debate in the Senate, where it even reaches a feverish pitch, and we have had more plans hatched and looked at by the Democrats, including the Murtha proposal, as MAXINE discussed, and the Levin plan in the Senate, as well as IKE SKELTON's proposal and DAVID PRICE's proposal down here. It goes on and on. So people can get confused.

Then, as you are chronicling these events, all of a sudden the Iraqi security adviser says they have a plan; and their plan includes, as Mr. INSLEE pointed out, that the Iraqi people want us out of there. Eighty-seven percent want us out of there. Eighty-seven percent believe that they are better off taking control of their own destiny. And now you are telling the American people, though, that, look, this really doesn't have anything to do with all of that. This is about an election. Not their election.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Our election. One of the fascinating things about it is, I don't know how many times the President has said, we will stand down when the Iraqis stand up. Well, that makes sense to people. People say, yes, that is right. As soon as they are ready to take over their country, we will back out and we will leave. So we think he really means it.

Then we have Maliki, the new prime minister, stand up and say, I have got a reconciliation plan, and I would like to talk with you guys about a timetable for you to leave.

Have you heard the President say one thing about the prime minister standing up? Of course not. They have ignored the fact that the Iraqis that they maneuvered into charge of the place are actually standing up and saying, yes, we are going to have to talk to the Sunnis, because we are Shia and they are Sunnis, and they feel like they are left out; and, secondly, we have to do something about all this fighting that is going on.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Briefly reclaiming my time, could it be that one of the reasons they are not speaking out as forthrightly as they should, and I am just surmising this, is because part of this reconciliation that has been discussed is the granting of amnesty to Iraqis who have murdered or kidnapped American soldiers or civilians?

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We have put forward a resolution here. It was debated during our discussion here, but not a nonbinding resolution. We put forward a resolution that will actually bind the Congress to instruct the President to send a message to the Iraqi Government that that cannot stand; that we, this Congress, and the American public will not stand by and let them recuse people who have taken American lives, who have kidnapped and tortured and mutilated Americans.

We will never stand by and let that happen. Could that be part of the reason?

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, well, one of the questions you have to ask yourself is, Did Mr. Maliki and the Iraqi Government sit down and come up with this reconciliation package all by themselves? Does anybody think that the American Government was not, in the form of the ambassador, involved in those discussions, or that

talked to the military? Of course they did.

So what you have got is our own government talking out of both sides of its mouth. The Iraqis, all they know is we are staying there. We have got a \$500 million embassy, the largest embassy in the world. It is really Fortress America. We have got military installations which are very permanent, and we are saying we are leaving tomorrow or sometime, whenever you are ready to run your own country.

The fact is that we have shown nothing to suppose that we really mean that we will one day say, you guys are doing such a great job, we are going home. See you later. That is not what we are up to. We are trying to control the natural resources of the area and trying to give ourselves a platform to operate some place in the Middle East, and we simply are going to have this fight continue unless, and I could not help thinking, I was sitting over thinking about what I was going to say today.

I remember during the Vietnam War, back in 1968, coming up to an election. What was Mr. Nixon saying at that point? I have a secret plan to end the war. Ha. A secret plan to end the war. After he was reelected, we went on for 4 more years. This issue, if the President is serious, then he ought to explain to us why he let his commanding general go out there talking about setting a deadline and bringing troops home.

Does he mean to do that, or is that just to throw smoke up in the air and get people confused? I think it is the latter. I do not think he intends to bring any troops home if he is going to give the impression that they are leaving Iraq. And that is why we have to continue to get out here and talk about what is in the newspapers.

I mean, you do not have to read very far. The London Times, the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, a few papers, and you can see it if you put it all together in one place. And that is why it is important for us as a body to have these hours when we do this.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. One gentleman who has been doing that consistently is the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts, who, along with Mr. INSLEE, headed up the Iraq Watch from the inception of this war, and who always provides us with insightful observations.

I am sure he is intrigued, as both Mr. INSLEE and Mr. McDERMOTT are, with the developments of this past weekend with General Casey's proposal, et cetera. I would yield to him at this time.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding. What I find interesting is ever since, well ever since before the invasion the administration has not been forthcoming, has not played it straight with us and with the American people.

And I just got in from Boston, my plane was late, I am sure that many of

you encountered those kinds of difficulties. But I had an opportunity to listen to my friend, Mr. INSLEE from Washington. And he talked about the Iraqi people not wanting us to stay, if you can accept the results of that poll, which presumably are valid.

And you make a point about the prime minister talking about a timetable. And yet during the course of, I do not want to call it a debate, but during the course of the speeches that were given here last week regarding Iraq, we heard a term like "cut and run," you know, cut and run.

Well, I find what is interesting is that now there is some cutting, or there appears to be some cutting. But you know what was unsaid during the entire conversation that was held on this floor? It is not just the Iraqi people that want us to leave, or at least to provide a timetable, but maybe President Bush was not hearing what the prime minister and the vice president and the president of Iraq had to say when he made his visit there a week or 10 days ago.

Because flying back on Air Force One with the media, this is what he had to say, "There are concerns about our commitment and keeping our troops there. They are worried, almost to a person, that we will leave before they are capable of defending themselves. And I assured them they did not need to worry."

But I guess when he says "almost to a person," he is not referring to the vice president and the president of Iraq. Because it was reported in the Associated Press last week that the Iraqi vice president had asked President Bush for a timeline for withdrawal of foreign troops from Iraq.

And that was confirmed by President Talabani, and in addition, President Talabani agreed with that request. So it was not just Democrats and others that were interested in a timeline for when we are getting out of there, but it was the Iraqi president and the Iraqi vice president.

And yet we hear terms like cut and run. Cut and run. The only thing we are cutting here are taxes for the super-rich and running up a deficit. That is what we are cutting and running here in this institution. Everyone recognizes there is a responsibility, but we did not get into this mess. Should we trust this administration?

We were told by the Vice President that we were going to be greeted as liberators. False. The Secretary of Defense said the war would not last more than 6 months. False. His deputy, Paul Wolfowitz, said that Iraq could pay for its own reconstruction from oil revenues. False.

We heard from the Vice President and everyone else that there were links between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein. False. False. False. And now we are told that, well, we cannot put out a timeline or a timetable to withdraw.

The Iraqi people want it. I dare say the American people need to know

about it. It is in the best interests of our national security, because what we are doing there is we are creating terrorists. We are eroding the efforts against terrorism worldwide the longer we stay there. We are viewed by the world as occupiers. All you have to do is take a look at the recent polling data, the most recent one being from a very reputable foundation, the Pew Foundation, 33 out of 35 countries have a negative image of the United States. Our own Government Accountability Office that my friends on both sides of the aisle know is a nonpartisan agency of the U.S. Congress has said this: anti-American sentiment is broadening and deepening and is a threat to our national security and will hurt our efforts against terrorism.

And, of course, there is a possibility and a real potential that it will hurt us in other areas, and furthermore it could very well erode and hurt our commercial interests.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. One of the reasons that we come to the floor this evening, and Mr. McDERMOTT alluded to it, is making sure that we do not sit idle to miss the so-called debate that Mr. DELAHUNT suggested took place both here in this Chamber, a non-binding discussion, if you will, and in the Senate.

Because in the past, charges have been made and leveled, slogans tossed out, and they have not been responded to. We are not going to stand by, because the American public desires a new direction, and more importantly desires people who are willing to speak truth to power.

That is why JACK MURTHA is so celebrated across this country. It is not so much for the particulars of his plan, but for the fact that he had the temerity to speak truth to power. And so we will not stand idle, and we will come to this floor on successive evenings to drive home the point to the American people.

Mr. DELAHUNT, you articulated so clearly the need to level with the American public. And I started this evening talking about saying goodbye to the Reservists and National Guard of the 1048th Truckers Division from the State of Connecticut, a very painful thing.

And most important is the need to level with our own troops and the families, who, as you point out, are the only ones who have had to make a sacrifice since September 11. The only people that our government has requested sacrifice of are the men and women who wear the uniform and their families.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And the American taxpayer.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to pose this question here about who is driving the bus when it comes to Iraq policy. And this is an important question I know all of us feel. Yesterday, two of our finest from the State of Washington were killed in Iraq, young men.

The day before that, a young man from Port Orchard, Washington, who

had been fighting for life for 3 months died in one of our hospitals in Texas. We need somebody to drive the bus of Iraqi policy that is trustworthy, accurate, and has a full understanding of what is going on in Iraq.

And when you ask yourself, does the President meet those criteria for that policy, does his policy meet that criteria; was he right on weapons of mass destruction? No. Was he right on association with 9/11? No. Was he right on the number of troops we needed? No.

Was he right on flak jackets for the troops? No. Was he right on armored Humvees? No. Is he right on the issue of who is actually doing the fighting now? He still wants to make it sound like it is just part of an international conspiracy, not a sectarian conflict that is going on when Shiites and Sunnis are killing themselves in the streets? No.

He still is wrong about the basic nature of the conflict, and yet some people in Congress want to let him just drive the bus after he has crashed it 52 different times, and we have lost over 2,500 of our finest as a result.

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It is time for someone else to start driving the bus, and that is Congress; to start asking these hard questions and demand a different strategy.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Well, I would conclude by asking a question, which is that, ultimately, what has occurred because of our invasion of Iraq? Let us project 2 years, 5 years, 10 years.

We hear so much talk about bringing democracy to the Middle East. Well, you know what I see, I see an emerging relationship between Iraq and Iran. I already have noted that there is a bilateral military cooperation agreement between Iran and Iraq. In my memory, please help me, wasn't Iran one of the original members of the access of evil club?

And just recently, I noticed where the prime minister suggested that the international community ought to leave Iran alone and drop its demand, drop its demand that Iran prove that it is not developing nuclear technology for purposes of a weapon.

Now, what is happening here? Are we going to end up with the legacy of this loss of American lives and American taxpayer dollars with a more influential Iran? I mean, please, has anybody even talked about this or considered it? Do we hear this as part of the debate and the discourse even among think tanks, even among the popular media outlets?

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Well, if the gentleman will yield, I think Graham Ellison has stated it most eloquently. He said "Americans are no safer from nuclear terrorist attack today than we were on September 10, 2001." He said, "A central reason for that can be summed up in one word: Iraq. The invasion and occupation have diverted essential resources from the fight against al Qaeda, allowed the

Taliban to regroup in Afghanistan, fostered neglect of the Iranian nuclear threat, undermined alliances critical to preventing terrorism, devastated America's standing with the public in every country in Europe, and destroyed it in the Muslim world."

That about sums it up, where we were and why we need a new direction.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlemen for joining me this evening.

FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. McCAUL of Texas). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the privilege to address you this evening, and I appreciate the fact that my message to you echoes across America in this technology that we have today.

As I awaited my opportunity to address the Chair, I also reflected upon many of the remarks that were made by my colleagues in the preceding segment, and I would like to start out first by stating that there were some remarks that I do agree with. I know that may seem a bit unusual, but the objection to the proposed policy by the newly sovereign nation of Iraq to the rejection of the proposed amnesty is something that we stand together on, as I heard my friend Mr. LARSON say; and I thank him for raising that issue tonight.

As I think about what that means, to offer amnesty to someone for killing Americans or killing coalition troops but not amnesty if they happen to attack Iraqis, whatever stripe they might happen to be, and the same administration will be making demands on us to prosecute to the fullest extent of the law and punish American soldiers that may or may not, but certainly today we know are accused of those kinds of activities.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. If the gentleman will yield.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I would be happy to yield to the gentleman from Connecticut.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. I profusely thank you and hope you will join us in signing H.J. Resolution 90 that we have put on the floor and we hope to bring to a vote before the 4th of July so that we send a very specific message.

I think that is something that everyone in this Chamber will agree with.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman; and I will take a good look at the text of that. I know that philosophically we do agree, and I will give it serious consideration, and that is the spirit that we should operate in in this Chamber. I appreciate the gentleman's work on this cause.

I do also, though, have an obligation to lay out a disagreement, and that disagreement is with the language we